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ON

ALASKA WATERS

BY

ONE OF THE TWELVE





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1887

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JUNE DAYS ON ALASKA WATERS

Out from the Golden City, out of the Golden Gate,
A steamer sailed one morning, filled with passengers and freight,
And turned her course due northward—she was bound for Puget
Sound,
Whose fair and sunny waters wash the shores for miles around.

On the steamer's deck was gathered a little group that day,
Friends who had started on a trip to a region far away,
E'en to Alaska's frozen shores. They wished to see the land
Of icebergs, seals and Indians. O happy little band !

Their number was the perfect one of twelve—O poet tell,
For in a poem like to yours, it would sound so well—
That there were just six maidens fair, six strong and valiant
knights,
Ready to brave all dangers, ready to share all sights.

In couples, two and two, to walk upon the steamer decks,
Each rescuer to his lady in case of storms and wrecks;
And, at last, the journey ended, six couple side by side,
To stand before the altar, each bridegroom with his bride.

But alas! the truth compels me to state the painful fact,
That nine of the twelve were ladies who knew just how to act:
And this left but three gentlemen, three ladies apiece, you see,
A very fair division, I think, between you and me.

And most of them had traveled, and quite prepared to say,
"This is finer than Alpine scenery," or, "Fairer than Naples Bay,"
Or, "Very like the Scottish Lakes with their stories of chief and
clan,"
Or, "Like the streams of Florida," or, "The waters of Japan."

Fine should have been the weather, 'twas the balmy month of June,
And, indeed, they went right merrily until the afternoon,
When a strong wind came down from the North—the ship began to
toss.

And one said for their comfort, "Of all rollers she's the boss."

And then those travelers straightway to their state-rooms did repair,
Some laid them down upon their berths, and sighed for want of air;
And one regretted that she'd come, and wished she were at home,
And said were she once safe on land, she never more would roam.

And one was cheered by "William" who stood beside her bed,
And kindly strove to comfort her, "It's very rough," he said;
And told her of the "Mexico" wrecked in the Georgian Bay,
And many other pleasant things to hear on such a day.

But one, a maiden fair and brave sat in a steamer chair,
And let the waves dash over her, as they leaped into the air;
That it was wet and cold and rough, never a bit cared she,
The Captain called her "obstinate" on deck in such a sea.

Next day the waves were calmer; from their state-rooms, one by one,

The friends with hearts of courage upon the deck did come;
And one did bring her guitar out, and sang some merry songs,
While daintily she picked the strings, to her all praise belongs!

But alas! for those nine ladies, there was only one man bold,
Who was able to assist them or do what he was told.

'Twas "Bring my shawl," or, "Fetch my chair," or, "Please hand me my book."

'Tis greatly to his credit that cross he did not look.

Right pleasant, too, it is to tell of their glorious night at sea,
When down upon the waters the moon shown tranquilly;
They sang and joked and chatted, so quick the hours sped,
That one defied the Captain and would not go to bed.

And thus for three whole days they went, until one sunny morn
They sailed around Cape Flattery—steamed up the strait San Juan,
And came up to Vancouver Isle with smiling verdure green,
And tarried in Victoria and cried, "God save the Queen!"

And much they liked Victoria, and drove to Beacon Hill,
Then walked about and gathered flowers in green woods sweet and still;
Then took a boat and glided over waters clear and smooth,
Which reflected every tree and bush as silently they moved.

Next day they crossed o'er Puget Sound, and in fair Port Townsend,
With its zig-zag walks and hills so green, some bright hours they did spend.

And it was "Pioneer Day" and they saw the veterans old,
Who there had just assembled, and many a story told,

Of the brave old days of long ago, when they crossed the plains
forlorn,

Or came "by way of the Isthmus" or sailed around Cape Horn;
And of how they lived their frontier life, the men and women too,
The friends longed to shake hands with them and say "We honor
you."

In and out of stores they went and all the clerks did smile,
To see them buying muslin curtains and rubber boots the while;
And candies, lemons, oranges and cherries, ripe and red,
And woolen stockings for their feet, and warm caps for their head.

And now, behold them on the ship—each one a berth assigned,
Also, a place at table, the best ones of the kind.
Soon after twelve—the last man on—the gang plank in was hauled,
And gaily to each other those twelve good travelers called,

We have started for Alaska! Feel the keen and frosty air!
God keep the good ship Ancon, and may we all get there!
But, better still, oh! may we all safe reach our homes at last,
And calm within our dwellings, our every danger past.

Tell how the good ship Ancon conveyed us o'er the main,
Far to Alaska's frozen shores and brought us back again;
And that the days we spent on her, forever more shall be,
A source of pleasure to us all, stored in our memory.

O beautiful was the Georgian Bay as they slowly steamed it o'er,
Their eyes they feasted all the day, on sea and sky and shore;
They passed the San Juan Islands and afar Mt. Baker rose;
They saw where the Fraser River into the channel flows.

But oh, the next day's wonders, what tongue or pen can tell!
They passed through Seymour Narrows, and felt the tidal swell;
And saw the dreaded rapids where the Saranac sunk,
And thanked their happy fortunes that the Captain wasn't drunk.

Up through the Georgian Bay they went all of that day and night,
Vancouver Island on the left, British Columbia on the right;
The day was dark and misty, with but glimpses of the sun,
The fog hung o'er the mountains, the rain it down did come.

Then the Captain gave an order: "Let the big black sail be spread."
Before them was a region dark as dwelling of the dead;
And those twelve brave adventurers stood with a sense of awe,
As the ship bore down towards those hills with the mists all covered
o'er.

Sure never did an artist conceive a darker scene,
Not even Gustave Dore in his "Wandering Jew," I ween.
Below the clouds of darkness were the hills in shadows drear,
And not a sound of human life fell on the listening ear.

But it was not into Hades that the travelers were brought,
For the sun shone out directly and a wondrous change was wrought,
The sea was bright with glory and the mountains tinged with light,
And all the snow-crowned peaks ~~shown~~ out, most beautiful and
bright. *Came*

But it seemed a land of changes, for before the night set in,
The rain was pouring down again, making the mountains dim;
The travelers made the best of it and said 'twas very fine,
But, at heart, they really wished it would not rain quite *all* the time.

But, oh! the glorious sunset, it lighted up the sea,
And threw a path of golden light across the waters free;
The travelers gazed delightedly and said 'twould be such fun,
To walk upon that path of light right straight into the sun.

And then, the long, long twilight, they could scarcely go to bed,
And many a time "Put out your lights," to the friends the watch-
man said;

They longed to watch the mountains and the phosphorescent sea,
And often said within their hearts, oh, who at home would be?

They could scarcely wait for daylight, so anxious they to see
What the next day's sail would bring them, what its glorious scenes
would be;

They went through narrow passes, as the ship wound out and in,
They could not look upon their books, said "reading was a sin."

They passed around Cape Caution and crossed Queen Charlotte Sound,
And also Fitzhugh Channel and Milbank, too, they found;
And into Grenville Pass they came, more beautiful than all:
"We never saw a scene like this"—"oh, who can it recall?"

All around were snow-clad mountains, at their side on either hand,
Rose high and wondrous islands clothed with forests dark and grand.
There were Indian huts and villages, and many an Indian grave,
Set high on poles and made of wood, the ashes dear to save.

And on the hills were land-slides covered with freshest green,
And far up on the mountains, patches of snow were seen.
There were granite cliffs and slaty rocks, and marbles, pure and white,
And water-falls down tumbling from many a sunny height,

“The rain it raineth every day,” of Alaska was that said?
And all that afternoon the rain poured down from overhead.
With gossamers and rubber shoes, the travelers paced the deck,
And sat upon their easy chairs and dreamed not of a wreck.

Again that wondrous sunset light, the mountains were on fire,
Their snow-crowned heads were glorious, oh, sure the eye would
tire
Of all the many beauties seen in the Alaska trip.
Let's take a rest and turn our eyes to something on the ship.

The “Ancon” it was large and fine, painted all fresh and new,
With spacious decks and state-rooms clean, and carpets fresh to
view;
And to the hungry passengers the table fare was good,
And none upon the Ancon did faint for want of food.

The Captain was a jolly man who played the violin,
So that the passengers might dance and give their thanks to him;
And all the officers were good, and anxious were to please,
And every opportunity of kindness they did seize.

“Where'er you may be going,” I heard a lady say,
“You are bound to find some other folks traveling that very way.”
And our twelve brave adventurers were not the only souls,
Who started for Alaska to brave the storms and colds.

Some of their fellow passengers were tourists like themselves,
Although they did not travel in a mystic round of twelves.
And some were bound for Junean, had an interest in the mines,
Some of them lived in Sitka and liked it at all times.

It was early in the morning of the fourth day of their sail;
One member of the company was leaning on a rail,
When the Captain called her up to see a mountain, grand and high,
Said they were in Alaska waters and that the Alaska shore was
nigh.

And one poetically said, as the sun shone bright and clear,
, That Alaska "smiled to welcome them,"—they were glad to be so
near;

'Twas true, the skies wept not that day, the sea was calm and blue,
And gaily sailed the Ancon, the quiet waters through.

Late in the afternoon they stopped; the engines had a rest;
The friends stood up and gazed around and tried to look their best.
The place was Ton-gass Narrows, 'twas a salmon cannery;
And gazing on those lovely shores some houses they did see.

The cannon boomed, the whistle blew and waked a dreadful sound;
A boat put out from off the shore, 'twas for the steamer bound;
And in it were two ladies, who went, the Captain said,
Two months ago to make their homes within that forest dread.

Next place they stopped was Loring, likewise a cannery,
On the isle Revilla Gi-ge-do, and they Naha Bay did see.
The great ship glided in a cove, the little boats came round,
Grand trees adorned the hill-sides, and moss and ferns the ground.

And then the travelers went ashore, and saw a beauteous lake,
There was a chain of them, they were told, as many as six or eight;
And all connected by cascades which into each one fell,
And that, the first lake of them all was named Adorable.

Next morn, it was the Sabbath, the wind was from the north,
When on the deck for exercise, they bravely sallied forth;
They all were wrapped in cloaks and furs; one of them held a muff,
And said it was an "old thing" but 'twas "comfortable enough."

The next thing on the journey that was worthy to be seen,
Was the yellow, turbid water of the river called Stickeen;
It came into the channel like a monstrous ~~smoke~~, *snake*
And of the clear, bright ocean a muddy stream did make.

"What can that be?" "The lunch gong?" "Will any person tell?"

"Why is it thus so early?" "Oh, we've come to Fort Wrangel.
And we shall be here full three hours, the curios to see,
And look upon the Indians, sons of the soil so free."

See now the twelve with happy hearts, they walk the gang-plank down,
And then behold them in small groups all scattered through the town;
They looked well at the curios, at silver bangles fine,
And bought a lot of old horn spoons, for bargains 'twas the time.

They also purchased pretty mats, fine braided by the squaws,
And gazed upon a wooden bear, and a pole marked by his claws;
They stood before the totem poles, and studied all the signs,
How man developed from the owl in old primeval times.

They walked into the Indian homes, and knocked not at the doors,
The walls were bare, the ceilings high, and wooden were the floors;
And in the middle of each room a fire built on some stones,
The smoke, it filled their eyes with tears and almost dried their bones.

They saw a squaw, and on her face the black paint was so thick,
They asked her what the matter was, she answered, "I am sick."
Some of the damsels were tattooed, and some were painted red,
Some wore a "drop" pierced through their chins, they were
"labrettes" they said.

And then those same good travelers said that they to church must go,
And see the squaws and braves at prayers,—"'Twere better to do so,
Than spend the whole long Sabbath outside of churchly walls."
But the Captain said, "Come quickly when the steamer whistle calls."

The church stood high upon a hill and overlooked the bay,
And all the old log houses, and the forts and totems gay;
And it was a pretty sight to see the squaws all neat and clean,
And on their heads bright handkerchiefs of red and blue and green.

And then three pretty Indian girls stood up and sang a song;
It was an anthem, "Praise the Lord," they chanted loud and long;
And then all bowed their heads in prayer and a chapter good was
read,
'Twas from St. Mark, the preacher said, and a girl interpreted.

But e'er the chapter ended there resounded through the town,
The Ancon's loud, shrill whistle and brought the travelers down,
From out the church so peaceful, from off the hill so green,
And such a getting out of church, I think was never seen.

But the travelers with one mind declared it had been a happy day;
And that it all was "like a dream," one of the friends did say.
And one thought of a story she had read not long before,
Of a child who, borne on angels' wings, to a heavenly land did soar.

And in her heart she said, "When I at home shall tell the tale,
Of this journey to Alaska—of this wondrous, wondrous sail,
Of the trees which grew in beauty close to the water's edge,
And of each reflected shadow, and of each rocky ledge,

"Of the tops of snow-clad mountains, of the skies of sunny blue,
Of the calm and tranquil waters, and the purple sunset hue,
Of the long days of our floating in this peaceful inland sea,
With never a thought to worry, and from every trouble free,

I, too, shall think it was a dream, or else that I was borne
On angels' wings to some bright shore, and back again have come
To tell the tale to those I love, and say 'I wish that you
Could have seen that sweet, bright country, and sailed those waters
through.' "

But oh then, from off the mountains, the wind blew icy cold;
It was enough to chill the blood of all those travelers bold.
And one more venturesome than the rest, when sought, at last was
found
Sitting upon the boiler—said to get warm she was bound.

But not for long they shivered thus—full soon they made a turn,
And into Wrangel Narrows came. O how the friends did yearn
For power to paint the scenery, it was so wondrous fair,
And very quiet was the sea, and very mild the air.

The channel was so narrow that the ship had barely room
To make the dangerous passage, and they had to do it soon,
For fear the dark night coming down, the pilot could not see,
And great danger of disaster and shipwreck there would be.

And when the sun was sinking low, they saw a mountain chain;
White, white and glistening were the peaks, to tell it, words are vain.
They sat upon the upper deck, "How lovely!" they did cry;
Oh, they could never go to bed without a heavy sigh!

But what is that before them? It's a steamer. See the smoke!
And soon the loud, strong whistles, the answering echoes woke.
The steamer was the "Patterson" come down to get her mail,
They stopped a moment, "spoke" the ship, then on again did sail.

But oh! would wonders never cease? As they pass through the straits,
A sight more grand than ever for the eager travelers waits.
A mountain chain, with glistening peaks, unfolds itself to view,
And they behold a glacier—a sight to them most new.

The scene was wild and desolate; they felt that they had come
Unto the polar regions—unto the frozen zone;
And they might look for icebergs, perhaps for polar bears,
And they must brave the freezing colds, "But never mind, who
cares?"

"All ready now for Douglass Isle," the Captain gaily cried,
The friends all gazed delightedly as they stood side by side.
For nestled down beneath a hill, a little town they saw,
And on the wharf were Indians—both child and chief and squaw.

Behold them now! To Treadwell Mine, their eager steps they bend,
They carried their umbrellas—of rain there was no end.
And up the steep, wild mountain side, full bravely did they climb,
"Oh! is not this delightful, to see the Treadwell Mine?"

They gazed with greatest wonder upon the mighty rocks,
In which were gold and iron ores, and where men were chopping
blocks.

And one did take a photograph, and some got specimens,
And said it was well worth the climb o'er brake and moor and fens.

At last, reluctantly they turned, they must the hill descend,
And, as one of the chaperons alone her way did wend,
Safe leaning on a trusty staff, she cast her eyes above,
And saw one of the maidens fair, whom every one did love,

Coming down from off the mountain side, with two strangers at her side,
Brave youths were they who, for her sake, all dangers had defied;
But the chaperon was greatly shocked, and joined herself to them,
And would not leave them any more—one maiden with two men.

And so they all together went down into the mill,
And first they tried a tunnel, and awe their hearts did fill.
They tried a dark and dangerous way, and each one held a light,
And waded through the waters deep, oh! it was black as night.

And the chaperon, most timid, did hang on to a man,
And to his coat-tails wildly clinging, and strove her fears to calm.
The scene, oh, it was weird and strange! they gazed upon the walls;
The water came all dripping down, like rain it ever falls.

Oh, how they feared explosions, fire damp and gases bad!
And dreaded that they'd lose their lights, and then the tale how sad!
For in that dark and tortuous mine, they all might lose their way,
Their friends would wish they had not gone to Treadwell Mine that day.

But they got safely out at last and to the mill they went,
Glad to be in the light again; and quite a while they spent
In looking at the furnaces where they did roast the gold,
And many very curious things about the ores they were told.

They looked at the machinery, the floors trembled 'neath their feet
The gentlemen could scarcely hear the ladies' voices sweet.
They went into the assayer's room, they saw his kitchen clean,
They looked well at his pretty scales—the prettiest ever seen.

And then the rain came pouring down, but the travelers did not care,
For they could very easily back to the ship repair.
And though the afternoon was drear, they said that it was best,
For they could take a little nap and give their eyes a rest.

And then again, at six o'clock, they steamed across the bay,
And saw the town of Juneau, which peaceful, nestling lay
Just underneath a mountain side,—'twas a mining town, they were
told,
Where men had gone and settled in the hope of getting gold.

And as the rain kept pouring down, they were a sight to see :
In rubber boots and water-proofs, and skirts tucked carefully ;
And as they walked the Juneau streets, for native goods to trade,
They all looked just like dominoes, bound for a masquerade.

But the most exciting thing of all, was to see the great stampede
Of all the Indians who, alarmed to see the cattle freed,
Did try to jump upon the decks, and screamed, and ran, and cried ;
And under sheds and boards and stones did frantically hide.

And when one steer did turn and try the driver's horse to gore,
The scene grew wild and wilder, and the panic still more sore!
And when he jumped into a boat and stove the bottom in,
The Indians got in their canoes, and a safe retreat did win.

Oh ! how the friends did wander through the streets of Juneau town,
And baskets bought, and curios, and furs as soft as down.
And oh, what pictures did they make with their arms all filled
with things!
And this to a sad part of my tale, my unwilling pencil brings.

The friends were *gulled*, for some of them did buy some some bracelets
fine,

They thought that they were silver from an Alaska mine,
And that a cripple made them, and that by the queen they were sold,
And each one was but a dollar,—a bargain great they were told—

But alas! they found they were cheated, for the bracelets were of tin,
And cost just fifteen cents a pair. Oh, was it not a sin !
But do you think these travelers would suffer this to be?
Ah no ! they~~s~~got their dollars back, as any one might see.

Then some of them went tramping far up the mountain side,
The paths were steep and slippery, and often did they slide,
And plunged into deep puddles, and were wet with the driving rain;
But they said 'twas very pleasant, and no one did complain.

And two, apart from all the rest, declared that they would go
Unto the Indian Village under the cliffs below.
And the "Queen" went in before them, just to lead the way,
And she would show them pretty things, and, "Follow me" did say.

The “Queen” was dressed in calico, with a shawl wrapped round her head,

And down the wild, steep Indian trail, the winding way she led
Unto the Indian village, but, so fast she went along,
That suddenly she disappeared; oh, listen to my song!

For nothing more was seen of her—although from door to door
The travelers asked for news of her, they saw her never more.
And when they asked an Indian “Brave” of some news of the “Queen”
He loud did laugh, and said, “I think it’s the *old girl* that you mean.”

I think she must have gone to bed; but the two were glad they went,
For they saw the Indian village, and a happy hour they spent;
The people came from out the huts, and gazed upon the friends,
And for the “Queen’s” courtesy did try to make amends.

A lady and a gentleman went out upon the bay.
Who rowed? It was the lady! Listen to what I say!
An umbrella she could not hold and she got dripping wet.
Perhaps she rowed three miles or more—I cannot guess it yet.

The gentleman sat in the stern, protected from the rain,
And did not move a finger, save to pull the rudder chain,
I cannot tell whose fault it was—this lack of gallantry—
There are always two sides to a tale, whatever the tale may be.

Others of that same party did go out with a book,
And tried to talk with Indians in the language called Chinook.
But all that the adventurers did accomplish in Juneau
It is impossible to tell; and now, we on must go.

Next morn it still was drizzling and drizzled all the day;
Much wished they for fine weather as they neared the Glacier Bay;
But they passed the Davidson Glacier, and stopped at fair Chilkoot,
And got the dictionary out, of knowledge in pursuit.

Now, Chilkoot was the highest point—the nearest the north pole—
Which these brave travelers did reach. One of their number stole
Ashore in an Indian canoe. He was the only one
Who dared to leave the “Ancon.” Loud may his praise be sung!

The next stop was at Chilkat; but it was not for long,
And gave not many an item to add unto this song.
And afterwards some small but pretty glaciers they did pass;
And much did they admire them as they viewed them with a glass.

Now, both Chilkat and Chilkoot are trading stations where
The Indians bring their skins and furs of seals and fox and bear;
And Lynn Channel is beautiful, up which the ship did glide;
And mountains most majestic did rise on every side.

The travelers said when they had reached the northern limit quite,
That they would not go to bed at all, but watch the Arctic night—
But alas; the weather was so rough they had a candy pull instead,
And then they all put out their lights and calmly went to bed.

Next morning they were tied up at a wharf, 'twas Killisnoo;
And to the ship foul odors the wandering breezes blew.
They found Killisnoo was a town, wherefrom fish oil was made,
From salmon and from codfish and from herring too 'twas said.

Upon the shore where waters clear went rippling o'er the stones,
They saw the Indian canoes and found some salmon bones;
They met a school-teacher, who showed with pride to them his school,
And told them that the Indian child was certainly no fool.

The Indians around them stood in groups of two and threes;
And often made a picture which an artist true would please.
Their houses all were made of logs, and were so very small
That the travelers wondered how they ever lived in them at all!

And then they went to visit Jake, an Indian Chief of note,
Who showed them Chilkat blankets and many a gaudy coat,
Above his door was written, in letters all could read,
A poem which I here insert, for it was fine indeed.

"By the Governor's commission, and the Company's permission,
I am made the great tyhee of this entire illalee.

"Prominent in song and story, I've attained the top of glory;
As Saginaw I know is fame, *Jake* is but my common name!"

On the ninth day from Port Townsend, the sun was shining bright,
The travelers heard the welcome sound, "Sitka is just in sight!"
And hurried on the upper deck to view the beauteous isles,
"How lovely!" burst from every lip. Their faces shone with
smiles.

Again through narrow channels the ship went on her way,
'Treading the dangerous passages—bound for Sitka Bay.
The travelers saw the mountains, and forts and islands green,
And above all towered Mt. Edgecombe—the highest mountain seen.

And just before they reached the port they crossed the open sea,
And felt the swell and looked across the expanse of waters free;
Then passed around an island, and in quiet waters then,
The great ship dropped her anchor and was safe in port again.

Now the travelers looked on Sitka and saw above it rise
Mt. Verstovaia high and green, like a sentinel in their eyes;
They saw the castle which crowned the height called Rock Kastalan,
And thought of the days of Russian rule—Oh, picture it who can!

Now, eager they to get on shore, and soon, so loud and shrill,
They heard the whistle of the launch and hastened it to fill.
And once on shore, their steps they bent to the old Greek church,
 while they
Did call upon the sacristan to open right away.

They gazed upon the pictures old, which hung upon the walls,
And saw the figures of the Saints—St. Michael's and St. Paul's—
All draped in silver and with golden halos round each head,
And candle-sticks, and silver lamps, and censers which incense shed.

They looked on a Madonna whose “sweet Byzantine face”
Was painted upon canvas and draped with silver lace;
And at the self-same altar in gorgeous robes were seen
The martyrs’ glorious company, and the apostles, too, I wean.

They left the church, and turned their steps toward Indian River
 where
They were told that they would look upon scenes so very sweet and
 fair,
That they would ne'er forget them, should they live for many a day,
And which they oft would think upon when they were far away.

And first they trod a graveled walk between two hedges green,
And many a pretty wild flower blooming bright was seen;
There were buttercups and violets, and salmon blossoms bright;
They were glad in far Alaska to see this lovely sight.

And still as on and on they went, new beauties were displayed;
That they never could describe them, the friends were all afraid;
For they were in the Alaska woods, and trod on mosses soft;
And to gather woodland treasures, they stopped and tarried oft.

There was not in all that forest an old trunk, all decayed,
But with ferns and flowers and mosses most beautiful was made;
And all around grew flowers, and the river rushing clear,
O'er rocks and stones and fallen logs, made music for the ear.

They crossed pretty rustic bridges and standing on them, saw
Where the wildly dashing rapids did leap and rush and roar,
And all at once the sun came out, and threw a flood of light
O'er all the scene. How beautiful to see the water bright

Go leaping, tumbling o'er the rocks, while through the forest wild,
The sunshine chased the shadows and the flowers look up and smiled!
And the trees of pine and cedar, and the dark green of the fir
Caught in their arms the bright sunshine and held it tightly there.

The friends were charmed with what they saw, and wished that they
could stay

In Sitka for a month or more, and go there every day.
They lingered long within that wood, and when they turned to go
Bade it farewell reluctantly, and walked with footsteps slow.

They looked upon an Indian School—a home for girls and boys—
Where noble men and women live, who, foregoing all joys
Of home and friends, had given themselves unto the work so true,
Of teaching Indians how to live. I think they are good, “Don’t you?”

At night an invitation came; ’twas for a dance on shore;
And once again in the steam launch, the friends were carried o'er;
The ball was in the castle given, and many a Sitka belle
Did come to charm the gentlemen, and danced both long and well.

At first they had some trouble—the musicians did not come;
Save one, who tried to inspire the guests with an accordion,
But the music was so solemn, and the wind kept dying out,
So it really was impossible to hop and skip about.

But at last there came a fiddler, and a man with a banjo;
And with the accordion player, they made the music go.
They played so very lively, and such a merry tune,
That the dancers soon went spinning around and around the room.

But the friends must go on shipboard before the midnight hour;
They said “good bye” and went away, but wished ’twas in there
power
To return the pleasant compliment which to them had been shown,
And receive their entertainers when they should be at home.

It was not dark upon the sea—the daylight lingered still;
’Twas like some poet’s dreaming, which one can read at will,
Of a land where darkness never comes, a land which knows no night,
Where the only change from garish day is the soft and sweet twi-
light.

Next day to purchase curios, again on shore they went,
And in the stores and Indian huts, much gold and silver spent
In buying baskets, bangles, nets and totem poles unique,
And many other curious things, of which I cannot speak.

They left Sitka with real regret and cast many a look behind,
As all among the islands, the ship her way did wind.
At eve, they passed through Peril Straits and went out upon the sea;
And until they passed Cape Fairweather the ship rolled heavily.

But when at last in the distant west the sun was sinking low,
The mountains seemed on fire again, with the rich, red sunset glow.
And from out the mist a rainbow came, and the eastern heavens
spanned,
With one foot resting on the sea and the other on the land.

And the travelers saw Mt. Fairweather and near it Mt. Crillon;
And between them were three other peaks, in the light of the setting
sun;
And much it pleased them when they heard the officers all say:
"To-morrow it will be pleasant and we'll go to Glacier Bay."

Oh! how cold was the bitter wind which they faced when they went out
Upon the deck next morning; and floating all about
Were lumps of ice most beautiful, and blue as summer sky;
The travelers knew that to the great Muir Glacier they were nigh.

And sure enough, they made a turn and there before them lay,
The Glacier gleaming in the sun. 'Twould surely be no play
To climb its steep and dangerous sides, to jump each deep *crevasse*,
To tread the muddy moraine, and o'er the rocks to pass.

And ever from the glacier's side, the ice came off in blocks,
And thundered down into the sea, which boiled beneath the shocks;
And the echoes rolled like thunder, and the waves dashed in the land;
Surely it was wonderful to view a thing so grand.

Then a boat was lowered down from the "Ancon's" side,
And in it to that barren shore the travelers did ride,
And stood upon the sandy beach all ready for a climb
Upon the glacier cold and drear; for work it was the time.

First over stones and bowlders, they careful picked their way,
Sinking sometimes in glacier mud, fast sticking in the clay,
And wading through the waters, and slipping on the ice,
And falling down, but up again they would be in a trice.

And there were shouts of laughter, and there were screams of fear;
But all agreed 'twas jolly fun, this climbing the glacier,
And that of all the days of travel, this was by far the best,
The happiest, the brightest, and distinct from all the rest.

And when they got beyond the stones and heard beneath their feet
The crackling of the ice and snow, they said it was a treat,
And made them think of eastern climes and of happy winterdays,
When they skated and went sleigh-riding and joined in merry plays.

They peeped into *crevasses*, into fissures whose deep blues,
Rivaled those of the sunny skies, or ocean's glorious hues.
Then jumped those same *crevasses*, and climbed each glacier ridge,
I cannot tell the jumps they made without stepping-stones or bridge.

The travelers stood and gazed upon that scene so strange and drear,
And said they would remember it, should they live for many a year,
The glacier with its ridges and *crevasses* so deep,
Its silence and its solitude as though Nature were asleep.

And although the friends were weary, and although the way was long,

They all wished it recorded, in story or in song,
That they thoroughly enjoyed themselves this day on Glacier Muir,
And that it was well worth the climb, they all were very sure.

But they were all really sorry that the Alaska trip was done,
And that they must retrace their way and start again for home;
They gathered in the social hall on the eve of that same day,
And drew up a memorial to thank the Captain gay,

Who had done so much to make for them the trip a pleasant one;
And they also thanked the officers who each the same had done.
And they all said that the *Ancon* was a comfortable ship,
And that they would recommend her to all who wished to take the trip.

And if any one should ask them if it were worth while to go
And see the great Alaska, they would not answer no.
But say, "By all means take the trip, but carry rubber shoes,
And umbrellas and water-proofs, and short skirts you must choose.

"But do not think you'll mind the rain, oh no! 'Tis dry,' they say;
And you can dress in gossamers and go out every day.
But take plenty of warm clothing, for 'tis very cold you see,
And you'll need the warmest wraps that you may travel comfortably."

The friends would not forget to thank one who oft refreshingly
Regaled them on an afternoon with a social cup of tea;
And also special mention of a birthday they would make,
When the ship was gaily decked with flags, and all had a piece of
cake.

But I have a picture in my mind, a little boat I see,
And warm rugs and umbrellas, three men and ladies three.
And what I heard about them I shall never, never tell,
But I am very sure that what it was *they* will remember well.

The downward trip was pleasant; but the only thing of note
Which the travelers had not seen before was when the good old boat
Did stop at Tongass Custom House and they saw an old log fort.
And that it was a pretty place all of the travelers thought.

I should like of the fair cities of Puget Sound to tell
Of Tacoma and Olympia and of high Seattle.
But time forbids and only of the mountains I can speak—
Of the Olympian Range, the Cascades and of Rainier whose grand,
grand peak

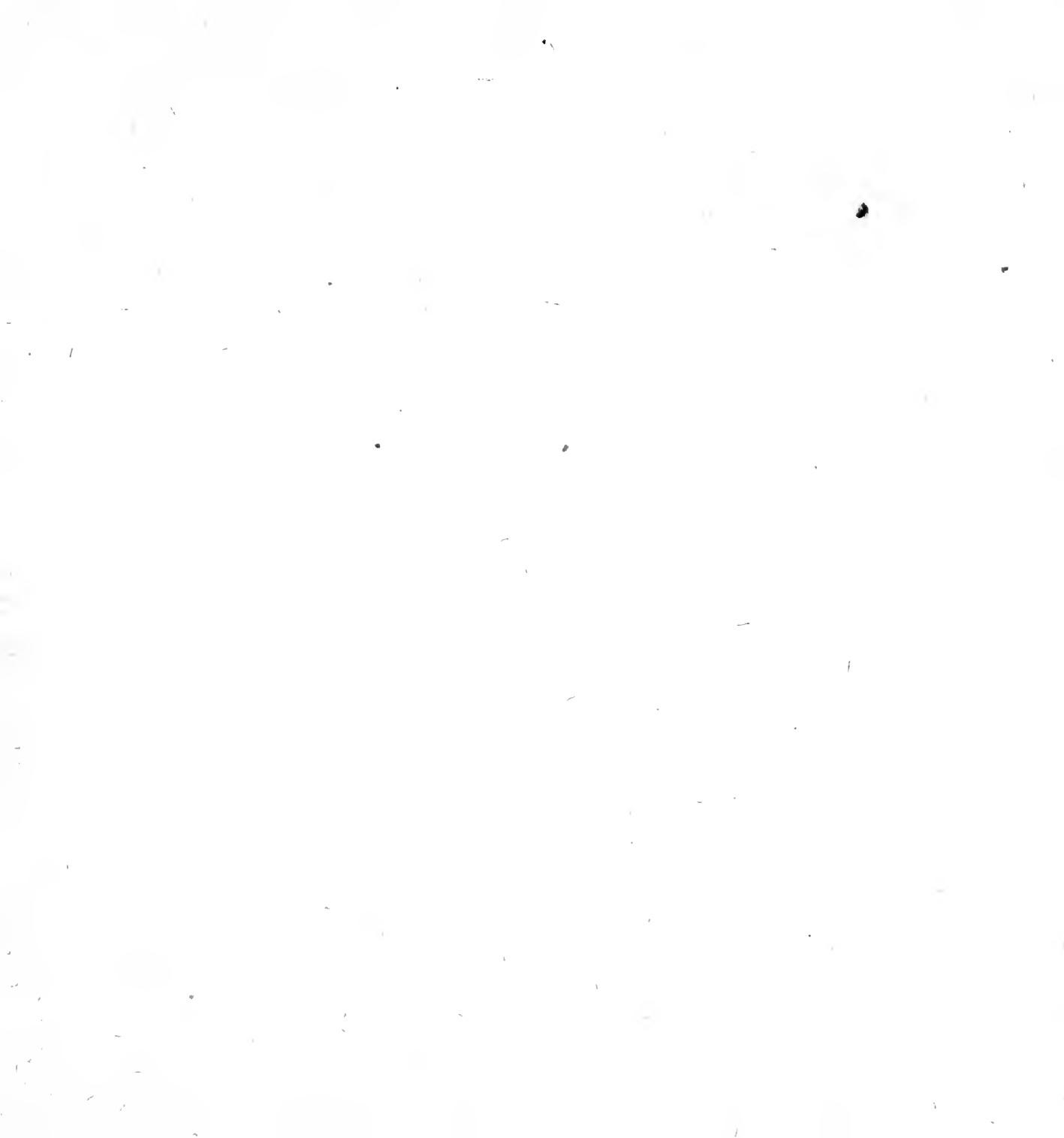
Did tower above the travelers in the light of the setting sun—
A splendid, glittering thing which astonished everyone.
It did not seem to touch the earth, nor seemed an earthly thing;
And into heavenly regions their happy thoughts did bring.

“On every height there lies repose!” The travelers let their eyes
Rest on Mts. Hood, St. Helens and Adams, as above the clouds
they rise.

And from the city Portland, they to the Dalles did go,
And sailed down the Columbia River, which is very fine, you know.

Now each of these good travelers thanks kindly every friend
Who cheered them on the journey; and if any their way do wend
Unto the southern countries, delighted the friends will be
To welcome them and show them all sights that they would see.

And they do also hope that if, like them, the Alaska trip they take,
That they, like them, will happy be, and a good impression make.
And now to captain, officers, and friends so good and kind,
They say good-bye with real regret to leave them all behind.



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